



Search:

Articles-last 7 days

for



## SiliconValley.com for breaking Tech News



[Around the World](#)  
[Correspondents](#)  
[Special Reports](#)  
[Washington](#)

[Back to Home](#) >

Monday



[email this](#)

Posted on Wed, Feb. 18, 2004

### SPECIAL REPORTS

- » [Election 2004](#)
- » [The decisions, policies and intelligence behind the Iraq War](#)
- » [Wright Brothers' first flight anniversary](#)
- » [Congo's on-going civil war](#)
- » [How your chocolate may be tainted by child slavery](#)
- » [Drought and hunger in southern Africa](#)
- » [Depression in Japan](#)
- » [Road to Yucca Mountain](#)

### NEWS TIPS

Do you have information to share with our reporting staff? Investigative editor James Asher would love to hear from you.

[Send James an e-mail!](#)

### COMMENTS

Have a question or concern about the Knight Ridder Washington Web site?

[E-mail our Webmaster!](#)

# White House backpedaling on prediction of 2.6 million new

By Ken Moritsugu  
Knight Ridder Newspapers

WASHINGTON - The White House on Wednesday struggled to get its economic message shied away from its prediction last week that the U.S. economy would add 2.6 million

In a testy exchange with reporters, White House spokesman Scott McClellan refused to say the administration still stood behind the projection, which was made in the annual Economic Report of the President and submitted to Congress with President Bush's signature.

"People can debate the numbers all they want, but the president's going to be looking at the numbers of jobs being created," McClellan said.

Many economic forecasters scoffed at the administration's projection, generated by the Council of Economic Advisers, as overly optimistic. The prediction could be politically embarrassing if the job market remains sluggish at the time of the November election.

The administration's handling of the issue could also fuel Democratic criticism that Bush is out of touch about the unemployed. Democratic presidential front-runner John Kerry, the Massachusetts governor, jumped on the latest statements.

"George Bush is saying he's going to create 2.6 million jobs this year alone, and his administration is saying, 'What, you didn't actually believe that, did you?'" Kerry said at a town hall meeting in Dayton, Ohio. "Apparently George Bush is the only person left in the country who actually believes the far-fetched promises he's peddling."

Bush wants to sound upbeat about the economy as he seeks re-election, but he risks losing touch with the unemployed. Democrats are quick to point out that the economy has lost 1.5 million jobs since he took office.

"The White House is caught in trying to maintain an optimistic outlook when things are not necessarily peachy for everyone in the country," said Nathan Gonzales, the political editor for

Rothenberg Political Report, a Washington-based newsletter.

The retreat from the jobs prediction reflects how touchy and important the issue is to election prospects, said Bruce Buchanan, a presidential scholar at the University of Texas.

"It signals some confusion about how to be portraying this sensitive issue," he said. "I'm sorting it out."

Reporters asked Treasury Secretary John Snow on Tuesday about the 2.6 million job prediction during his trip to Oregon and Washington state to promote the administration's job-creation plan.

"I think we are going to create a lot of jobs. How many I don't know, but we're going to work on it," Snow said.

Gregory Mankiw, the chairman of the president's Council Of Economic Advisers, didn't backpedal when he said last week that jobs moving offshore "is probably a plus for the economy in the long run."

Many workers blame offshoring for the loss of American jobs.

Bush distanced himself from Mankiw's remarks last week, and Mankiw on Tuesday called them "injudiciously worded comments."

"I learned an important lesson from that experience: Economists and noneconomists speak different languages," he said in a speech to economists. "The two languages share many things in common, but they are often interpreted in different ways."

 [email this](#)



© 2004 Real Cities Network  
All rights reserved.  
Real Cities Network

[About KRWashington.com](#) | [About the Real Cities Network](#) | [Terms of Use & Privacy Statement](#)  
[Ridder](#) | [Copyright](#)